

UPDATE: Atchison Chemical Plume 100% Dissipated

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Atchison city officials say the chemical plume that sent dozens to the hospital is no longer a concern, but the Kansas Center for Toxicology and Environmental Health will continue to monitor the air in the city for the remainder of the night.

Just after 8 a.m. Friday, a delivery error caused sodium hydro-chlorite and sulfuric acid to be mixed together at MGP in Atchison. The result was a dense chlorine cloud that settled over much of the city.

Residents were immediately urged to shelter in place and shut the doors and windows of their home. Schools in the area, including Benedictine were evacuated.

The chemical plume caused dozens of people to seek medical attention for respiratory, skin, and other irritations. As of 6 p.m. Friday evening, more than 100 people were treated at hospitals in Atchison and the surrounding areas.

A spokesperson for the Atchison hospital said 67 patients visited the emergency room. One of those patients was put into intensive care, but hospital staff say they are in stable condition.

18 patients visited the emergency room at Mosaic Life Care in St. Joseph. Mosaic officials say 17 of those patients were released, but one remains in intensive care.

Seven Atchison city employees, three police officers, two firefighters, and two public works employees needed medical attention following the chemical reaction. They were all treated and released.

Friday afternoon, Atchison city manager Trey Cocking said the chlorine cloud was 100 percent dissipated, and that EPA air testing concluded all air levels were satisfactory. Cocking said the levels will continue to be monitored and assessed overnight, but there are no further problems anticipated.

"We are thankful that we don't have any life threatening injuries involved in this today," Cocking said.

Doctors recommend residents experiencing a stuffy nose, sore throat, or minor headache to take Benadryl or shower to help with their symptoms. They say if you're experiencing difficulty breathing, wheezing, or more serious issues to go to the nearest emergency room.

A hotline has been set up for residents with medical concerns, or further questions about the incident at MGP. If you have questions, you're asked to call 913-286-5190.

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